

Message Text

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21/43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 USIA-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 A-01 OPR-02 SY-04

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 PC-10 TRSE-00

AGR-20 CU-04 NIC-01 SCCT-02 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /187 W

----- 038080

O R 141240Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4226

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9809

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (REF. B.)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, EGEN, PGOV, TH

SUBJECT: TEXTILE WORKERS STRIKE RESOLVED

REFS: A. BANGKOK 96IR

B. FBIS D 140215Z JUNE 74

C. FBIS D 140223Z JUNE 74

D. FBIS D 140937Z JUNE 74

E. FBIS D 140940Z JUNE 74

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F. FBIS D 131555Z JUNE 74

G. FBIS D 131520Z JUNE 74

1. THE MORNING NEWS PAPERS REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD GRANTED VIRTUALLY ALL DEMANDS OF THE TEXTILE STRIKERS EXCEPT THE 25 BAHT MINIMUM WAGE, FOR WHICH IT OFFERED 20 BAHT (REF B). ALTHOUGH EMPLOYERS REPORTEDLY SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S COMPROMISE (REF C), LABOR LEADERS REPORTEDLY WERE SPLIT ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE WAGE OFFER. SOME WERE HOLDING OUT FOR 23 BAHT FOR THE BANGKOK-THONBURI AREA. THE LABOR LEADERS FINALLY ACCEPTED THE GOVERNMENT OFFER. PRIME MINISTER SANYA SPOKE TO THE NATION OVER RADIO AT 1230 (REF D) EXPLAINING THE POINTS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND STRIKERS. LABOR LEADERS PRASIT CHAIYO (REF E) AND THOETPHUM CHAIDI ALSO SPOKE ON THAT RADIO PROGRAM CONFIRMING THE AGREEMENT AND ASKING THE STRIKERS TO RETURN HOME.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO THE WORKERS' DEMANDS: MINIMUM DAILY WAGE OF 20 BAHT IN THE BANGKOK-THONBURI AREA; EXTENSION OF THE 16 BAHT MINIMUM DAILY WAGE TO TWO PROVINCES NOT PREVIOUSLY COVERED; INDICATION THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER BROADENING THE AREA NOW INCLUDED IN THE 20 BAHT MINIMUM; RELATIVELY GENEROUS SEVERANCE PAY DEPENDING ON EMPLOYMENT (FOR EXAMPLE, 180 DAYS PAY FOR THREE OR MORE YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT); AND FORMATION OF A LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE WORKER REPRESENTATIVES TO INVESTIGATE LABOR/MANAGEMENT DISPUTES. SANYA ALSO PROMISED TO REQUEST THAT THE FACTORY OWNERS GIVE FULL PAY FOR THE PERIOD OF THE PRESENT WORK STOPPAGE.

3. OUR POLITICAL ASSISTANT REPORTED THAT THE CROWDS AT SANAM LUANG CONTINUED TO BUILD THROUGH THE AFTERNOON, APPARENTLY OBLIVIOUS TO THE ANNOUNCED RESOLUTION OF THE STRIKE. A GOVERNMENT LOUDSPEAKER VEHICLE WAS NEARLY MOBBED WHEN IT TRIED TO INFORM THE CROWD OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT. AT 1600 HOURS PRASIT CHAIYO AND THIRAYUT BUNMI ADDRESSED THE CROWD AND TOLD THEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ACCEPTED THE

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WORKERS' DEMANDS. AT THIS SAME TIME, LEAFLETS INCORPORATING THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S ORDERS IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT (REFS F AND G) WERE DISTRIBUTED. AFTER THESE SPEECHES THE CROWD BEGAN TO LEAVE THE AREA.

4. COMMENT: INFLAMMATORY PRESS REPORTS HAVE STRESSED THE ROLE OF A HANDFUL OF FORMER STUDENT ACTIVISTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY (PFD).

ALTHOUGH THESE ACTIVISTS MAY HAVE SERVED AS CHEER-LEADERS, THEY DID NOT CONSTITUTE MASS STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE TEXTILE WORKERS STRIKE. THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE NATIONAL VOCATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND, AND ITS STATIONING OF SECURITY GUARDS AMONG THE DEMONSTRATORS ON THE LAST DAY, HOWEVER, DID INDICATE A POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE. OTHER STUDENT GROUPS CONFINED THEIR PARTICIPATION TO COMMUNIQUE OF SUPPORT FOR THE WORKERS.

5. THE NEW GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO HAVE MET ITS FIRST DOMESTIC CHALLENGE, ALBEIT BY A NARROW MARGIN. THE GOVERNMENT OFFER WAS GENEROUS, BUT ALMOST TOO LATE. BECAUSE THE SETTLEMENT APPLIES ACROSS THE BOARD, THE GOVERNMENT HAS VERY LIKELY ACHIEVED A REPRIEVE FROM OTHER DEMANDS FOR INCREASED WAGES AND IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS, AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THE FUTURE RATE OF INFLATION AND WORKER ASSESSMENTS OF THEIR PROSPECTS FOR OBTAINING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FROM DIRECT ACTION AGAINST A COMPROMISE-INCLINED GOVERNMENT WILL STRONGLY INFLUENCE THE DURATION OF THIS REPRIEVE.
KINTNER

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Message Attributes

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